



**OFFICE OF THE
Advisory Board
TOWN HALL
511 MAIN STREET
DUNSTABLE, MA 01827-1313
(978) 649-4514 x222 FAX (978) 649-4371
advisory@dunstable-ma.gov**

March 11, 2019

Present: Adria Fischer, Eric McKenzie, Kieran Meehan, Bob Nelson, Harold Simmons, Leo Tometich
Also attending: Town Administrator Brian Palaia, GDRSC Chair Marlena Gilbert, Police Chief Dow

Meeting called to order at 6:03 p.m.

FY20 Budget

Collaborative discussion between the school district, town departments and town officials has made it possible for the FY20 budget to progress to its current state.

1. Brian presented budget scenarios with varying cuts and amount of free-cash use in the operating budget.
 - 1.1. Most of the AB prefers to try and implement the first list of budget cuts, but will likely allow increased free-cash spending to mitigate the more severe cuts outlined in the second proposal.
 - 1.2. Chief Dow indicated that he does not support the additional police department reductions in the second proposal.
 - 1.3. Using additional free-cash in the operating budget reduces the amount available for capital expenditures, so maybe we can only partially fund some anticipated capital items in FY20.
2. The GDRSC has voted to use \$400,000 out of their E&D fund to offset some of the unanticipated FY20 school district budget growth. This brings the GDRSD assessment down enough to immensely improve the Dunstable municipal and overall FY20 budget outlook. The GDRSC plans to approve the FY20 school district budget on March 13th.
3. On the revenue side, there was some discussion about new growth projections.
 - 3.1. The goal is to get a good new growth estimate for budget projections.
 - 3.2. Maybe the AB could look at estimated and actual new growth from previous years, in Dunstable and surrounding towns, to see if a correction factor might be helpful in the budgeting process.
4. Note that a balanced budget must be presented at the annual town meeting.
 - 4.1. It is possible to have one budget balanced with an override, and a second balanced budget without the override in case the override does not pass.
5. The AB wants to discuss the FY20 budget with BOS to build consensus on a transparent budget process with a consistent message to our community.

Water System Upgrade

1. The proposed water system upgrades are close to going out for bid.
2. The water department anticipates having some bids so a firm cost can be presented at the annual town meeting.

Miscellaneous Topics

1. A brief discussion about town government organizational changes that may simplify operations, improve efficiency and provide some overall cost savings. This will likely be addressed by a separate committee.

Motion to adjourn at 7:55 p.m. - Adria, - 2nd Bob. Vote: Unanimous
Meeting adjourned at 7:55 p.m.